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Editors' Notes

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Editors' Notes

D'Esta Love, Stuart Love

Editors' Introduction

Our second issue for Volume Four is entitled *Women and Ministry*. Fran Carver and Dean Smith serve as guest editors for one of the most challenging questions churches of the restoration heritage face at the close of the twentieth century. Fran teaches in the Religion Division at Pepperdine University. She is finishing her Ph.D. in church history at Princeton Theological Seminary. Dean Smith preaches for the Sunset Ridge Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas. Our purpose is to encourage Christians and churches to heighten their awareness and understanding of this vital topic. Our appeal is to our hearts as well as to our heads. Both women and men have written articles on a variety of crucial aspects of our theme. We encourage you to read the articles in the order they appear to benefit from their cumulative effect. The authors have approached their topics with a pastoral concern for the spiritual needs of our readers and each piece has been written to make an educational contribution. We want to thank Fran and Dean and all of our writers for their efforts to accomplish this purpose.

Before our guest editors prepare us to read the issue, let us catch up on a bit of **Leaven** news and present some new opportunities. Our presence at the ACU Lectures resulted in a number of new subscriptions and three gifts totaling \$300 to reprint more copies of our issue on the Lord's Supper. We have had such a demand for this issue, including a request to translate it into Japanese, that we would like to reprint it. Could you possibly help us by making a tax-deductible contribution? We can reprint eight hundred copies for \$1200. *The Lord's Supper* issue will be used for promotional materials at the North American Christian Convention in Dallas, Texas, in July. Also, we have printed additional copies of this issue, *Women and Ministry*, and your help in covering these costs would be appreciated, since these expenditures take us beyond our modest yearly budget of a little less than \$12,000. Please contact us if you are interested in helping or have questions.

We are pleased to announce that Markus McDowell has consented to be our Book Review Editor. You have enjoyed his articles and reviews over the past year, and now we are heartened by his agreement to serve in this capacity. He invites your help in writing reviews and helping us find good books for review. His email address is <mcdowell@fishnet.net> or <mhmcdowe@pepperdine.edu>. You may contact him as well through our address and phone number listed on the inside front cover.

What now follows is our guest editors' introduction to this issue.

What is Our Purpose in this Issue?

Christians have disagreed over the roles of women in ministry since the first century, so we know a single issue of **Leaven** on the topic will not answer all the questions. In fact, our purpose here is not to debate at all. Rather, with this issue, we hope to provide an introductory vehicle for churches and Bible classes to study and discuss the topic of gender roles. We have attempted to enhance this emphasis on community dialogue by including study questions at the end of each article. Although we recognize there are important dimensions of the topic unaddressed in this issue, such as a theology of gifts, we commend it to you in a spirit of **faith** (that God will bless your reading and use of the issue), **hope** (that the articles will stimulate meaningful discussion and spiritual growth), and **love** (that, no matter the variety of opinions on this topic, our compassion for one another may increase).

We have arranged the articles according to four categories: (1) women in church; (2) biblical and historical perspectives; (3) women and ministry; and (4) other features, including

an article on reading resources on women in ministry.

Women in Church

Whereas churches in our tradition are accustomed to focusing first on the Bible, we want to emphasize first the importance of the community context into which the Bible is brought. A key question about this context concerns why the topic of "women in ministry" is pastorally necessary. In her powerfully personal journal, **D'Esta Love** answers this question for us. She leads us through poignant turning-points in her journey and underscores for us the pastoral context of the topic that is, women's soul-deep struggles over their contributions to the church. **Gary Tallman** through a delightful piece looks through the eyes of a six-and-one-half year-old-boy at the powerful influence of Christian women in the lives of children.

Biblical and Historical Perspectives

With our community contexts established, we turn to several articles on the biblical understanding of women's roles. **Dean Smith** takes us into the world of an Old Testament woman who challenged the social values of her time, yet seemingly was rewarded with God's blessings. **Stuart Love** crosses the bridge beautifully from community context to biblical world by posing an intriguing scene: a report by the writer Luke to a contemporary congregation. **Scott Bartchy** gives us two parallel reports in his article: both his personal journey of approaching the topic and how that journey unfolded as he sought to understand Paul's view of women in ministry. One of Paul's letters, 1 Corinthians, is placed in its social context by **Kindalee Pfremmer DeLong**, who describes for us the social values which undergirded gender roles in the first century. **Christopher Hutson** takes the magnifying glass even closer by focusing on the many functions women performed according to Romans 16. Finally, **Fran Carver** places the topic in historical context by describing seven roles through which Stone-Campbell women participated in the nineteenth century.

Women and Ministry

Bill Love answers "Four Questions" many congregations are asking. His experience in leading a congregation through the transition to expanded

participation for women equips him well to provide answers. In addition to these pastoral concerns, another dimension is the impact of changes at the congregational level. Drawing on her expertise as a sociologist of religion, **Kathy Pulley** gives us a helpful overview of such "change factors." **Anna Griffith** highlights in her article the range of ministries in which women are currently engaged. In articles by **Mac Dauphin** and **Emily Jones Rushing** and by **Kathy Pulley**, we are allowed to experience the process through which two churches, one in Alabama and one in Massachusetts, arrived at the decision to eliminate gender barriers to participation. These articles clearly indicate that the transition was not pursued willy-nilly; rather it was preceded and accompanied by years of reflection, prayer and study.

Other Features

Claude Cox brings us a number of resources for further study and reflection in his review of books, articles and lectures concerning gender from within and without our tradition. Book reviews include **In Memory of Her, a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins** by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, reviewed by **Christy Adler**; and **The Women's Bible Commentary** edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, reviewed by **Ronald L. Tyler**.

Fran Carver and Dean Smith

Future Issues

Final work is being done by **Tommy King**, minister of the Glenview Church of Christ in Tyler, Texas, on our next issue, *Children and the Church*. The Pepperdine Lectures will be the basis of our fourth issue on the book of Job. **Bill Love** will open Volume Five with an issue on preaching. Pray for **Leaven**. Our purpose is to serve Christians and churches of the restoration heritage with thoughtful materials on Christian ministry. Do you know someone who should be reading **Leaven**? It costs only \$10 for a gift subscription for one year!